GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3240
ANSWERED ON:23.03.2005
DECLINE IN SEX RATIO
Veerendra Kumar Shri M.P.

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that there is decline in Child Sex Ratio among the educated and rich sections as reported in the `Hindu` dated February 19,2005 ;

(b) if so, the facts thereof ;

(c) whether the Government agrees with findings of the study conducted by the Centre for Social Research that there is growing acceptance of female foeticide and lack of implementation of the law; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government for the effective implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b) Declining trend in the Child Sex Ratio has been a matter of concern for all in the country. In India, the child sex ratio for the age group of 0-6 years was 927 girls per thousand boys in 2001 against 945 in 1991 Census. The Census 2001 figures further revealed that the child sex ratio is comparatively lower in the affluent regions, i.e., Punjab (798), Haryana (819), Chandigarh (845), Delhi (868), Gujarat (883) and Himachal Pradesh (896). The figures reported in the Hindu, dated February 19, 2005, correspond to `Sex Ratio at Birth` which are not comparable with the figures of `Child Sex Ratio for the Age Group of 0-6 years`.

(c) & (d) The study conducted by the Centre for Social Research itself quotes that correct figures on female foeticide are not available. So, it is difficult to conclude that there is growing acceptance of female foeticide. In order to check female foeticide Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act has been brought into operation in the country since 1996. The Implementation of the Act rests with the States and Union Territories through the Appropriate Authorities appointed under the Act at State, District as well as at Sub-district levels. The violators of the Act are punishable with imprisonment upto 5 years and fine up to Rs.5 lakhs, along with cancellation of registration of the license. Under the Act, all units using ultrasound machines etc. should get themselves registered failing which these may be sealed and seized. By the end of February 2005, 25770 Units have been registered in the Country. There are 300 ongoing Court/Police Cases and 33 machines seized / sealed. Out of the total of 300 violations, 214 relate to non-registration, 10 relate to non-maintenance of records, 24 against communication of the sex of the foetus and the remaining are for other violations of the Act. In Delhi, 1779 ultrasound units have been registered and there exist 73 Court/Police cases. National Monitoring and Inspection Committee has been constituted at the Central level to take stock of the ground realities by field visits to the problem areas. The sale of ultrasound machine by the manufactures can only be made to the units registered under the Act. For better implementation of Act at prosecution level, National Judicial Academy, Bhopal has been involved in the training of Judiciary. To enhance awareness about the Act, a number of activities through print and other media units are undertaken.

It is, nevertheless, recognized that mere legislation is not enough to deal with this problem that has roots in social behavior and prejudices. Various activities have been undertaken to create awareness against the practice of pre-natal determination of sex and female foeticide through Radio, Television, and print media units. Workshops and seminars are also organized through Voluntary Organizations at State / regional / district / block levels to create awareness against this social evil. Cooperation has also been sought from religious leaders, as well as medical fraternity to curb this practice. The Government of India has launched `Save the Girl Child Campaign` with a view to lessen son preference by highlighting achievements of young girls. For 2003-04, Ms.Sania Mirza, Tennis player, and for 2004-05, Ms. Aruna Kesvan, CBSE topper, were appointed as Brand Ambassador for the Campaign.